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ABSTRACT

This report examines the community organizational structures and the views of community and organizational leaders of the New York City area Dominican and Colombian populations. Community public policy needs are identified, and the degree to which these leaders feel needs are being met is explored. In the first stage of research, the organizations were identified. Then a "snowball" research strategy of followups was pursued to identify additional organizations. Focus group discussions among organization leaders then provided information on public policy issues. Of the 87 organizations identified, 51 focused on the Dominican community and 36 on the Colombian community. Five main types of organizations were identified (indigenous sociocultural, civic, trade, and umbrella organizations, and nonindigenous relevant organizations). The prevalence and importance of each group differed among Dominicans and Colombians. Some geographic differences were noted, but one of the most important distinctions is that Dominican organizations tend to be incorporated and to have nonprofit status, while Colombian organizations are less likely to have nonprofit status, and less able to attract external funding. In both communities, civic organizations were the most stable and best able to accomplish their goals. The inventory of the organizations of these two groups suggests that there is great potential and civic spirit in these organized efforts, but that most could benefit from additional funding and better communication with government and other private agencies. In both communities, leaders agreed that their constituents need to know about their legal rights and obligations, to learn English, and to understand the political and governmental system better. Additional public support could enhance the efforts of both communities. (Contains 6 tables and 113 references.) (SLD)

Project Research Team

Organizational Inventory and Community Leadership Study

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Diversifying the New York Area Hispanic Mosaic:

Colombian and Dominican Leaders' Assessments of Community Public Policy Needs

The Tomás Rivera
POLICY INSTITUTE

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Executive Summary

With the rapid growth in the nation's Hispanic community, policy makers, elected officials, academics, and community and civic leaders have realized the importance of understanding the complexity of the U.S. Latino experience. Over the past decade, a wealth of scholarly and policy analytic research has examined the largest of the Latino populations — Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans. However, far fewer analytic studies have focused on the newer and smaller Hispanic populations. This report sets forth the findings of a study conducted by the NALEO Educational Fund and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute to assess the public policy needs of Colombians and Dominicans in New York City and Northern New Jersey. It is a companion to a comparable study in the Los Angeles area that evaluates the public policy needs of Salvadorans and Guatemalans. The four Latino populations are the largest nationally after Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans.

Research Objectives

Diversifying the Hispanic Mosaic examines community organizational structures and the views of community and organizational leaders of the New York area's Dominican and Colombian populations. We identify community public policy needs and assess the degree to which community leaders believe that these needs are being met. In an accompanying report, we present demographic profiles of the New York area's Colombian and Dominican populations. These twin studies offer a previously unavailable portrait of these populations.

Methodology

The research involved two stages. In the first, we identified community-based organizations in parts of New York City and Northern New Jersey that had large Dominican or Colombian populations. Once we identified organizations in these areas, we employed a "snowball" research strategy (following up references provided by organizations that we had spoken to in order to identify other organizations) that allowed us to look outside of the areas of residential concentration.

In the second stage of the research, we conducted focus groups among leaders of these organizations. These focus groups asked community leaders to identify key public policy issues for the communities and to discuss ways in which Dominicans and Colombians were responding to these needs.

Primary Research Findings: Organizational Inventory

We identified 87 organizations, of which 51 focused on the Dominican community and 36 on the Colombian community. While common patterns appeared in the types of organizations that formed, each community organized in distinct manners. It should be noted that the various organizational resources and strategies utilized by community leaders respond to the needs of these communities and allow for rich organizational networks in both communities.

We identified five main types of organizations, and we learned that the prevalence and importance of each type varies between the two communities (see pages 9-12 and 19-21 for a detailed discussion of the organizational inventories). While the communities and organizations are largely united in a common public policy agenda, several differences exist:

Geographic differences:

- Dominican organizations in Washington Heights are more likely to organize around social problem-solving agendas, while Dominican organizations in Queens and the Bronx focus more on recreational activities.
- Colombian organizations in Queens tend to have broader social problem-solving agendas, while those in New Jersey tend to focus on artistic and cultural activities.

Organizational resources:

- Most Dominican organizations are incorporated and have non-profit status. This non-profit status enhances their ability to attract external funding. Many maintain their own office space and hire paid staff.
- Most Colombian organizations have not sought non-profit status. These organizations sustain themselves from member contributions, community fundraising events, and solicitations to Colombian businesses.

Types of organizations:

- Among the different types of organizations within both communities, civic organizations are the most successful, stable, and formalized in their efforts to accomplish collective goals.
- The Colombian community had equal numbers of cultural and civic organizations, with few trade associations or organizations that belonged to larger umbrella groups, such as colloboratives and councils of federations ("umbrella organizations").
- Cultural and civic organizations also dominated in the Dominican community. Some civic organizations have been able to establish formal relationships with government institutions that contract with them for the delivery of social services. Trade associations and several umbrella organizations supplemented the cultural and civic organizations.

Organizational strategies:

- Leaders of Dominican civic organizations have diverse views regarding the most effective organizational strategy. Some believe that as more Dominicans assume leadership positions in organizations that represent the status quo, the more responsive government will be to community problems. Others believe that there is a danger that organizations will be co-opted. This view holds that these leaders may lose sight of the real issues and devote themselves to ensuring the survival and growth of their organizations.
- Colombian organizations rely less on formal organizational strategies than do their Dominican counterparts. Many rely on informal leadership and do not have paid staff. As a result, these questions about organizational strategies raised in the Dominican community are not as relevant among Colombian organizations.

Organizations that Serve the Communities

We also considered the role of organizations that are located in and serve the Dominican and Colombian communities, but that do not specifically target their services to those communities (such as governmental or non-profit organizations which serve a variety of immigrant or ethnic groups). Because these organizations are so numerous, we did not attempt to include them in our inventory. However, we learned from our research that Dominicans have acquired positions of leadership in these organizations, as well as serving as liaisons between the organizations and Dominican clients. This has not occurred at the same pace in the Colombian neighborhoods. This does not mean that Colombians do not hold positions in all types of public, non-profit, and service organizations; in fact, they do, but not in positions specifically established to serve the Colombian community.

Community Leadership Assessment of Dominican and Colombian Public Policy Needs

The group discussions we held with community leaders helped to identify important needs and problems of the community. Leaders discussed in detail the external and internal barriers to successful integration and to active participation in American society faced by community members.

Issues identified as being important to both communities:

- Education (crowded and impoverished schools; low quality of education; misdiagnosis of children's problems resulting in stigmas and tracking)
- Job opportunities and economic devel-

opment (including under-utilization of the professional labor force; exploitation of unskilled laborers because of their immigrant status)
- Discrimination
- Poor police-community relations
- Public service delivery and under-utilization of government services by immigrants
- Obstacles to adaptation faced by recent immigrants (including lack of information and orientation)
- Obstacles to incorporation faced by longer-term residents after encountering social, economic, and educational barriers
- Barriers to political participation faced by U.S. citizens

Issues identified only by the Dominican community as being important:

- Housing
- Public safety

Issues identified only by the Colombian community as being important:

- Negative public image of Colombians in the United States, and the detrimental consequences for U.S. Colombians
- Absence of unity in the Hispanic community

Conclusions

The inventory of Colombian and Dominican community-based organizations suggests that there is great human potential and civic spirit within these organized efforts. Yet, these organizations depend on the efforts of individuals who must also earn a living. Their success, even under these conditions, suggests that they are ready to attract more stable funding, abandon some of their localism, and create channels of communication with government agencies as well as other private sources of support. They would also benefit from gaining technical information about how to work more efficiently and effectively in the context of U.S. institutions.

Additionally, there are important similarities between the two communities in terms of their expressed problems and needs. In both cases, leaders agreed that Dominican and Colombian immigrants need to know about their legal rights and obligations, they need to learn English, and they need to understand the political and governmental system better. Leaders from both groups emphasized discrimination as a critical obstacle, pointing to the fact that for this particular problem, it is the receiving society that needs to act to correct this.

Finally, common to both communities was the perceived assets each community enjoys, particularly the human capital and entrepreneurship that each is bringing to this nation. Moreover, there is a clear interest in participating in the political life of this country. The communities are acutely aware that they need to participate more at all levels of the political system. They are equally aware that the present level of participation of most community members is low. This study suggests that the potential degree of civic involvement of Dominicans and Colombians in the New York City metropolitan area could be reinforced and channeled to produce positive results, if the indigenous organizations within these communities were more directly supported by elected officials and policy makers.

Diversifying the New York Area Hispanic Mosaic:

Colombian and Dominican Leaders' Assessments of Community Public Policy Needs

The steady expansion of the nation's Hispanic[1] population has generated a wave of social science research on the components of this population. These new studies examine the degree to which Hispanics should be viewed as a single ethnic group or, instead, as individual national-origin populations that make up the whole. These studies analyze various characteristics—demographic, immigration and settlement patterns, political values, attitudes, and behaviors, or other characteristics and behaviors—but they all share a broader concern. They assess commonalities and differences of the national-origin populations that are subsumed under the category Hispanic.

The primary focus of many of these studies has been on the three national-origin groups that make up the majority of Hispanics nationwide—Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, and Puerto Ricans. Together these three populations account for approximately 80 percent of the Hispanic population.

These research efforts have demonstrated that it is not possible to make simple generalizations about Hispanics. Instead, as de la Garza et al. note:

> "[T]hese groups [Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans] do not constitute a political community. They clearly agree on some key questions, but they disagree on others. Indeed, sometimes a particular group more closely resembles Anglos than any one of the other populations" (1992:16).

This research into the three dominant Hispanic national-origin groups, and the intra-Hispanic differences that it has documented, raises the salience of the study of other Hispanic populations. This report examines the community organizational structures and the views of community and organizational leaders of the New York area's Dominican and Colombian populations.[1] We seek not only to identify these communities' public policy needs, but also to assess the degree to which community leaders believe that these needs are being met. In an accompanying report, we present demographic profiles of the New York area's Colombian and Dominican populations (NALEO Educational Fund and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute 1996*b*). In this report, we compare Colombians and Dominicans to other Hispanic populations, to non-Hispanic whites, and to non-Hispanic blacks.

Profile of the Emerging Hispanic Populations

Beginning in the 1960s, nationals of Colombia and the Dominican Republic began to immigrate to the United States in large numbers. In part, this immigration came about as a result of changes in the U.S. immigration law in the 1960s that expanded the Western Hemisphere's share of immigration. This inflow also reflected changes in Colombia and the Dominican Republic that allowed and encouraged migration. While small numbers from each of these countries had immigrated prior to the 1960s, immigration increased rapidly in the 1960s (see Table One). The volume of Dominican immigrants, for example, increased by a factor of nine between the 1950s and the 1960s. Colombian immigration more than tripled.

Over the past three decades, immigration from these countries has continued to grow. Legal immigration in the 1980s totaled more than two hundred and fifty thousand for Dominicans and one hundred and twenty thousand for Colombians. Because immigration data for the 1980s include many recipients of legalization under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, they offer an indicator of the size of the legal immigrant and long-term undocumented

Table One. Immigration to Permanent Residence from Colombia and the Dominican Republic

	Colombia	Dominican Republic
1930s	1,223	1,150
1940s	3,858	5,627
1950s	18,048	9,897
1960s	72,028	93,292
1970s	77,347	148,135
1980s[1]	122,849	252,035
1991[1]	19,272	41,422
1992[1]	12,885	41,948

Notes:
[1] Immigration data for the 1980s, 1991, and 1992 include recipients of legalization under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 who immigrated prior to 1982.

Sources: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1970; 1980; 1991; 1993.

Table Two. State of Intended Residence for Immigrants from Colombia and the Dominican Republic, 1992

State	Colombia %	Dominican Republic %
California	8.3	0.3
Florida	21.6	5.0
Massachusetts	2.0	5.0
New Jersey	17.1	11.3
New York	28.1	61.1
Puerto Rico	1.1	12.1
Texas	4.4	0.3
Other	17.4	5.1

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1993.

populations. These figures exclude short-term undocumented immigrants, so they underestimate the annual immigration-related growth of these populations.

These permanent residence and legalization beneficiaries offer insights into the characteristics of this immigration. Table Two examines the intended states of residence of 1992 legal immigrants. Dominicans overwhelmingly migrate to certain specific areas: more than 70 percent state an intention to reside in either New York or New Jersey. Colombians do not report the same levels of intended geographic concentration. Nevertheless, approximately 45 percent reported an intention to reside in the New York-New Jersey area, more than double the next largest state (Florida). Our research focuses on these areas of greatest Colombian and Dominican concentration—New York City and northern New Jersey.

Scholarly Study of the Dominican and Colombian Communities

Academic study of Dominicans and Colombians[2] in the United States has not been particularly rich. Overall, there are few studies that examine the characteristics, community organization, and public policy needs of these populations. Of the studies that do exist, few use quantitative or other research methodologies that can be duplicated by other scholars. While the limitations of the scholarship can be partially explained by the relative recentness of the arrival of many Dominicans and Colombians in the United States, the consequences remain. The dearth of scholarly analysis on these populations makes it difficult for advocates and policy makers to document community needs and to design programs that can effectively respond to these needs.

In this report, we briefly summarize the focus and findings of previous scholarship. We also suggest how this previous scholarship shaped our research strategies and research questions. In a separate study, we have analyzed the findings of these previous studies in greater

depth than we can here (NALEO Educational Fund and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute 1996*a*). This aforementioned report on scholarly research on Dominicans and Colombians in the United States also examines research on two other understudied emerging Hispanic populations—Salvadorans and Guatemalans.

The previous research on the emerging Hispanic populations can be categorized into six aspects of these populations' experiences in the United States: the migration experience; labor force participation and earnings; community-level political organization; settlement; gender; and family structure (see Appendix One). Before discussing the specifics of these studies, it is important to mention that they rely on various strategies to examine the experiences of these populations in the United States. Scholars have conducted ethnographic studies in the communities, focused on community elite's attitudes, analyzed community organizational structure and development, performed survey research, examined U.S. and foreign census data, and theorized about the factors creating or weakening community cohesiveness. What these previous studies largely have *not* done is build on others' findings to create a foundation for a complex understanding of the characteristics and needs of the New York area's Colombian and Dominican populations. The following is a brief summary of previous research findings in these areas.

The Migration Experience

The most analyzed aspect of the experience of Dominicans and Colombians in the United States, as well as that of the other emerging Hispanic populations, is their migration experience. This scholarship examines such questions as why Dominicans and Colombians leave their home countries, what skills and experiences they bring with them, and where they migrate to in the United States. These works primarily look at the experiences of one nationality group or of those from a specific region of the sending country. They focus broadly on the emigration and immigration experiences and are less concerned with the process of immigrant acculturation in the United States.

Studies of the migration experience were the earliest analyses of these populations (and, for that matter, of other immigrant populations). These works emphasize the continuing connection between émigré populations and the sending country or sending region. They assert, though offer little empirical evidence, that Dominicans, Colombians, and other emerging Hispanic populations are primarily sojourners in the United States who intend to return to their home countries after a period of work in the United States.

Most of these studies are descriptive. Some offer only the observations of the researchers to substantiate their claims. Of those that do use data, most rely on ethnographic studies of small populations or on census data. Thus, the reliability of these studies is subject to question much more than the other studies discussed in this review. The most studied population is Dominicans (n=15); relatively few studies of Colombians (n=3) exist. Few of these studies build on the findings of previous analysis.

The findings of these studies demonstrate that each of these populations is heterogeneous in terms of both origin and settlement. The factors that shape their decision to migrate to the United States shape their U.S. experiences. Thus, it is necessary to ascertain why individuals migrated, what legal status they immigrated into, what sorts of social and economic networks they had upon immigration, and, for those who migrated as legal immigrants, how they were able to obtain their immigrant visa. These immigration characteristics demonstrate some aggregate differences between Dominicans and Colombians. Colombians have a longer history of migration, beginning initially in small numbers in the 1940s. Further, the majority have entered as permanent residents who are eligible to become U.S. citizens after five years. Dominicans, on the other hand, began to immigrate in the early 1960s. Dominican immigrants include large numbers of both documented and undocumented migrants. Nearly four in five Dominicans migrated initially to the New York/northern New Jersey area. Colombians, on the other hand, have more dispersed destinations with New York the most common, but including large numbers going to Miami.

These studies identify a second set of characteristics that influence the migration experience. These are the basic sociodemographic characteristics that shape the experiences of natives and immigrants alike—education, job

skills, family structure, language abilities, age, and residential characteristics. As our categorization of the existing scholarly literature on Dominicans and Colombians demonstrates, many of these characteristics are the subject of more focused scholarly investigation. We will next discuss the findings of these studies in greater depth.

Research implications for the present study

When the aforementioned demographic traits appear in analysis of the migration experience, they are most often treated in passing. Thus, none of these studies analyzes these factors and, more importantly, the interaction of these factors. Instead, they mention them as part of the immigrant package and indicate that these basic sociodemographic traits differentiate immigrants. The findings reinforce the evidence that these populations are heterogeneous. They also guided the first step in our research—to produce a demographic portrait of each of these communities (NALEO Educational Fund and Tomás Rivera Policy Institute 1996*b*).

Reshaping Political Loyalties and Settlement

The second most common scholarly approach to the study of emerging Hispanic populations concerns reshaping political loyalties and settlement. Studies such as these examine the process by which immigrants reshape their political attachment from loyalty to the sending country to the United States. The focus of this newly emerging attachment varies from study to study. In some cases, authors examine the residential or community settlement in which immigrants develop an attachment to their new neighborhoods, often neighborhoods dominated by their co-ethnics. Other scholars examine how political loyalties shift over time. It is important to emphasize that scholars of the settlement process do not find that the development of new attachments, whether to the community to the political community, come exclusively at the expense of attachment to the sending community or country. Instead, the more nuanced research shows how migrants from Colombia and the Dominican Republic develop and maintain simultaneous attachments to the sending and receiving countries. For example, the idea of a "transnational identity" has been the subject of several recent studies of New York's Dominican population.

Because settlement is a question of increasing importance, we expect to see more of these analyses in the future. In a sense, they are the "second generation" studies to the migration-focused studies that have dominated the literature on Dominicans, Colombians, and other emerging Hispanic populations. Many of the migration-focused studies assume, yet do not demonstrate empirically, that many emerging Hispanic immigrants will return to their countries of origin. This assumption neglects the long history of immigrant experiences in the United States in which immigrants initially report a desire to return to their home countries, but relatively quickly shift their attachment to the United States. The settlement literature seeks to measure this transition and investigate the factors that facilitate or dampen evolving attachments and loyalties.

Research implications for the present study

We seek to evaluate these evolving attachments and identities through objective measures—rates of naturalization—and through leaders' assessments of the interests and barriers faced by immigrants seeking to become active in U.S. politics or to naturalize. In the accompanying report, we evaluate these objective measures. Here, we discuss the leaders' observations in three areas—Dominican and Colombian interest in naturalization, Dominican and Colombian attachment to the United States, and efforts to structure Dominican and Colombian political influence in the United States.

The leaders report that many more Dominicans and Colombians are interested in naturalizing than are able to navigate the bureaucracy. Further, these leaders find that a sense of attachment to the United States predates the immigrants' efforts to make the attachment more formal by naturalizing. Finally, the leaders identify a potential for U.S. political influence, both through naturalization and through a U.S.-born population that is increasing in absolute numbers and is entering adulthood and the years of likely political participation.

Labor Force Participation and Earnings

The next most-common subject of scholarly investigation is analysis of labor force participation and earnings. Unlike the studies of migration experience and settlement, investigation of labor force participation and earnings is more likely to be comparative, examining the relative labor force participation or earnings of two or more national origin groups or of all recent immigrants in a city or region. Most of these studies link the sociodemographic characteristics or immigration characteristics to the relative success of immigrants in the U.S. economy. Several do not compare across national origin lines, but instead across gender lines.

The findings of these studies are not unexpected. Colombian, Dominican, and other emerging Hispanic populations with high levels of education at the time of immigration or experience with skilled trades or professional work have higher status occupations than their counterparts who have low levels of education or fewer job skills. Immigration status also influences labor force accomplishments. Generally, immigrants who arrive on permanent resident visas have a wider range of economic opportunities. The other immigration-related trait that has a consistent impact on the experiences of Dominicans and Colombians in the United States is length of residence. Longer-term immigrants (whether documented or undocumented) show more evidence of acculturation than do more recent immigrants.

Research implications for the present study

The importance of labor market access and earnings to the process of immigrant adaptation to the United States appears in many of these studies. In our research, we sought to document the economic position of Colombians and Dominicans as well as to assess leaders' views of economic and labor force barriers faced by these communities.

Community-Level Political Organization

Few of the scholarly studies assess the political activities of Colombians or Dominicans. Many are not U.S. citizens, so this dearth of analysis can be partially explained. Focusing solely on the political activities available to U.S. citizens, however, neglects two forms of political expression available to immigrants. The first of these is involvement in the politics of the sending country. The second is community-level activity in the United States that does not require U.S. citizenship.

Of these two topics, few scholars have looked at the first and more have looked at the second. Although there is a wealth of anecdotal and journalistic accounts that Colombians and, particularly, Dominicans in the United States involve themselves in electoral politics in their home countries, scholars have not investigated this. Some of the migration studies discuss, if only in passing, the continued involvement of émigrés from a town or region in local civic development projects such as disaster relief or supporting the building of hospitals or town halls. Yet there is no in-depth analysis of this phenomenon that measures such questions as how frequent it is, who in the United States is likely to be involved in home-community political activities, what the impact is on the receiving community or on émigré cohesion in the United States of being involved in such projects.

The aspect of community-level political organization that is more widely studied in the Colombian and Dominican communities is the formation of community-based organizations. These studies focus only on organizations in New York city, but nevertheless offer some important insights into the organizations as well as the individuals who join them. The types of organizations discussed in these articles include: fraternal and national origin clubs, sports and recreational clubs, professional associations, and, in the Dominican community, social service delivery organizations. In addition, there is mention of, but not analysis of, groups that emerge in response to a specific community need. These studies find that the sociodemographic traits of individuals shape the likelihood that an individual will join organizations and the number of organizations that he/she will join.

Several of these studies highlight a reticence to share a political agenda with Hispanics of a different national origin. In New York, particularly, Colombians and Dominicans report some animosity and rivalry with other Hispanic populations. Thus parallel community organizations sometimes emerge. This indicates that a pan-Hispanic political agenda may not offer a

foundation for the political development of these populations. Interestingly, studies from cities with no single dominant Hispanic national origin group, such as San Francisco, indicate that cross-Hispanic community or political organization is possible.

Research implications for the present study

Recognizing the importance of community-based organizations to Colombian and Dominican community politics, we developed inventories of these organizations as the first step in our field work. We then developed a typology of these groups. From these inventories, we selected leaders to participate in focus groups in order to examine community public policy needs. These leaders are in a unique position to evaluate the organizational development of each of these populations.

Gender

A few articles examine the experiences of women from the Dominican Republic and Colombia. They attempt to differentiate the experiences of male and female immigrants. The consensus of these articles is that women benefit more than men from immigration. The migration experience alters the dynamic of family relations in such a way as to increase the influence of household women. In part, this heightened influence results from the labor force characteristics of Colombian and Dominican households in which most adults are active in the workforce. Women's earnings, therefore, become crucial to the economic advance of the household.

A second finding of these studies of gender roles is that women are more reluctant than men to return to the country of origin out of concern that their social status and their status within the family will return to the pre-immigration level. Women, thus, appear to deter return migration.

Research implications for the present study

In our focus groups, we ensured that women were equally represented as men. We also probed on policy issues of particular importance to women.

Family Structure

A final category of studies examines the family composition among emerging Hispanic populations. Three of the four studies on this topic come from the same survey of Colombians and Dominicans in New York conducted in 1981. The sample has been extensively reanalyzed by several authors and shapes the discussion of the impact of immigration on Dominican and Colombian families.

Clearly, the question of Colombian and Dominican immigrant family structure has received relatively less scholarly attention than the other research themes that we have identified. Most of the family structure studies, on the other hand, are quantitative.

Research implications for the present study

As will be evident in the discussion of the leaders' assessments of community needs, family issues proved quite important to the public policy worlds of Colombians and Dominicans. Further, as the demographic portrait indicates, Colombian and Dominican family structures are quite distinct not just from Anglos and blacks, but also from non-Colombian and non-Dominican Hispanic households.

Other Scholarly Studies of Colombians and Dominicans in the United States

Several studies examine other aspects of the experiences of emerging Hispanic populations in the United States. These studies are quite idiosyncratic and, for the most part, compare a specific emerging Hispanic population to the non-Hispanic white population. They look at such topics as the role of Hispanic women in New Jersey, the diversity of Hispanic populations in Chicago and Miami, and library utilization patterns of Hispanics.

Conclusions: The Study of Colombians and Dominicans in the United States

This emerging literature raises quite a few questions about the experiences of Colombians and Dominicans in the United States. Because many of these works do not build on previous scholarship, these questions tend to remain asked but unanswered. Of these questions, two

were key to the research that we undertook as part of the New York Community Leadership Survey. First, we sought to evaluate the degree to which U.S. politics and U.S. public policy issues were relevant to Colombians and Dominicans in the New York city and northern New Jersey area. While our biases and experiences told us that the findings in previous research that these populations were simply sojourners were misleading, we wanted to test this assertion more rigorously. As we will indicate, Colombians and Dominicans are not sojourners and are in fact actively organizing to achieve political ends in this country.

Second, we sought to uncover which issues and concerns mobilized these populations. We wanted to identify what their policy needs and understand how they were seeking to shape policy in these areas. In order to evaluate this question, we undertook the New York Community Leadership Survey to identify the infrastructure of community-based organizations in each of these communities and to measure leaders' evaluations of community needs.

In the review of the existing scholarly literature, we referred to first- and second-generation scholarship. The first and by far the majority of the scholarly work on the emerging Hispanic populations assesses the migration experience, such as the factors that lead to migration and the initial experiences of the migrants once in the United States. Second-generation scholarship looks at how the migrants and their U.S.-born children shape their relations with the United States to become full and equal participants in the polity. Our Community Leadership Study is firmly in this second generation. While immigration continues, it is not the sole issue of interest in the community and does not determine the focus of community politics. Instead, immigration offers a foundation on which Colombians and Dominicans build an understanding of U.S. national and local politics.

New York Community Leadership Study

The purpose of the New York Community Leadership Study was to create an exploratory portrait of the Dominican and Colombian communities in metropolitan New York city. The research objectives of the study were:

- To identify the organizational and human resources available in these communities in order to create an inventory of community organizations and to identify the most representative sources of community leadership.

- To contact leaders at different levels of community involvement and to explore their perceptions about the community's needs and service utilization problems.

This report presents the research findings for each community, focusing first on an inventory of organizational resources, and then on leaders' perceptions of community needs and problems. We constructed the community inventory from data collected during field work involving one-on-one interviews, direct observation, and document compilation. We identified community needs and problems during group discussions with selected leaders.

Time Frame and Scope of the Research

We conducted the research between May 1994 and January 1995. Between May and August 1994, we compiled an inventory of community organizations. From August to October we conducted focus groups of Colombian and Dominican community leaders.

To narrow the scope of the research, we defined "immigrant communities" as individuals who self-identify as members of a common group based on their ethnic, national, and/or family ties to Colombia or the Dominican Republic. We defined "leaders," a term we will use throughout this report, as those individuals actively engaged in helping the community solve specific problems or improving the quality of its life.

In contrast to previous studies of these groups that focused on the neighborhoods of Washington Heights for Dominicans and Jackson Heights for Colombians, our study encompassed a broader geographical area. We used census data and did field work throughout the entire metropolitan area. The study concentrated

on the following areas:

- **Dominicans:** northern Manhattan (Washington Heights); southwest Bronx; Queens (Corona); and, to a lesser extent, Brooklyn.

- **Colombians:** Queens (Jackson Heights); and selected towns of eastern New Jersey.

These areas were selected on the basis of three criteria: they included significant clusters of census tracts in which at least 5 percent of the population was Colombian or Dominican; they were areas that allowed relatively easy access to members of these populations; and there was evidence of a minimal degree of organization around community concerns. Because Washington Heights (in Manhattan) and Jackson Heights (in Queens) contain the highest concentration of Dominicans and Colombians respectively, many of our findings refer to these particular neighborhoods.

Methodology and Research Stages

The project consisted of four phases of data collection: identification of preliminary contacts; field work in the community; development of the inventory; and implementation of focus groups.

Preliminary contacts

Our initial sources of information were personal contacts with members of both communities, visits to institutions in the neighborhoods, conversations with elected officials and other community leaders, and a brief review of media sources. Contact with Colombian and Dominican elected and appointed officials in New York and New Jersey was critical during this stage.

Field work

From a preliminary list of ethnic community leaders, we used a "snowball" technique (asking previously identified organizations to identify new organizations until no new organizations are mentioned) to identify new individuals and organizations. We contacted them to explain the project, to collect information about organizations in the community, and to obtain new names. We also selected social events in the communities as key places to meet Colombian and Dominican leaders. These events provided additional opportunities to meet people already contacted by phone and to meet leaders and organizations that had not been contacted nor identified.

The community inventory

The classification that follows is based on five main categories and relevant sub-categories. In the following categories, "indigenous" refers to those groups formed within the Colombian or Dominican communities.

- *indigenous sociocultural organizations*: their goal is to promote integration of community members through social, cultural, and artistic events or through sports activities. We differentiate two types of indigenous sociocultural organizations: hometown organizations, or pro-national identity cultural organizations; and cultural and artistic organizations. The first are more typical of the Dominican community and the second of the Colombian community.

- *indigenous civic organizations*: their purpose is to provide needed services to the community. They are either multiservice or specialized organizations. These are of equal importance in both communities.

- *indigenous trade associations*: their members share a common interest in a profession, craft, or industry, independent of geographic area. Sub-categories are professional and entrepreneurial organizations. The former is present in both communities, while the latter is more typical of the Dominican community.

- *indigenous umbrella organizations*: they coordinate the work of independent organizations that have similar goals. They may be called collaboratives, networks, councils, federations, etc. This type of organization is more common in the Dominican community.

- *non-indigenous relevant organizations*: umbrella organizations, government agencies, and non-profits with strong ties to the community. This type of organization appears only in the Dominican community.

The focus groups

We conducted four focus groups with members of each community, for a total participation of 52 leaders in eight group events lasting two hours each. To be invited, participants had to meet one of two qualifications: individuals recognized by the community as leaders, based on reputational standing or individuals who acted in a leadership capacity in formal organizations; or independent activists who had participated in mobilizing the community.

All invited leaders were indigenous to the community.[3] Table Three describes the groups that participated in the discussions, by community. Based on preliminary inquiries, we decided to run the focus groups in Spanish.

We will present the portrait delineated by leaders in two sections. The first section details the problems and pressing needs of each community. The second section addresses the obstacles to successful integration and the obstacles to the active participation of community members in American society.

Table Three. Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

	Dominicans	Colombians	Total	%
Sex				
Female	11	7	18	35
Male	13	21	34	65
Age				
21-29	2	1	3	6
30-40	13	5	18	35
41-64	8	20	28	54
65 or older	0	2	2	4
Live and Work in Same Borough				
Yes	19	18	37	71
No	5	9	14	27
Highest Level of Education				
Some College	3	11	14	27
B.A. or B.S.	10	3	13	25
Masters	8	8	16	31
Ph.D. (or candidate)	3	6	9	17
Total Number of Participants			52	

Dominican Organizations in the New York City Metropolitan Area

The Dominican community is rich in organizations, both in numbers and types. They range from informal efforts of collective action around a particular sport or social activity, to formal, large, and complex non-profit organizations that receive government funding, have permanent paid staff, and provide services in a systematic way. In between are organizations with varying degrees of stability, mixed funding sources, mixed compositions (volunteers and paid members), and mixed purposes (from recreation to service). Several groups have organized confederations or coalitions that unite around similar agendas, sometimes cutting across geographical boundaries. In addition to indigenous organizations, there are also non-profit and governmental agencies whose executive directors and upper-tier leaders are Dominican.[4] Table Four provides an overview of the Dominican organizations in the inventory.

Indigenous Sociocultural Organizations

These mutualist organizations are the initiative of a group of individuals who know one another as Dominicans or through their common ties to a particular region in the Dominican Republic. Their members organize weekend sports and recreational activities and they have developed an informal support network. Examples of activities performed by these organizations include organizing sports leagues; soliciting money from community businesses to help fi-

Table Four. Overview of Dominican Organizations

Type of Organization	*Number Identified*
Socio-cultural	
Hometown-based	9
Cultural	7
Subtotal	16
Socio-civic	
Specialized	10
Multiservice	4
Subtotal	14
Trade Associations	
Professional	6
Entrepreneurial	4
Subtotal	10
Umbrella	
Subtotal	4
Total Number of Indigenous Organizations Studied	44
Non-Indigenous Organizations	7
Total Number of Organizations Studied	**51**

nance these leagues (i.e., to purchase uniforms); organizing events around national holidays; holding conferences on Dominican history or other topics of interest; providing English classes; and collecting funds to support their hometowns in the Dominican Republic.

Hometown associations

Organized by region or by town of origin, most of these associations act as benefactors of their hometowns by addressing concrete problems. Activities have included sending money to schools in the region, buying an ambulance and a fire truck, and buying books for students. For example, a small group of people from the city of Santiago formed the Manhattan-based Nucleo Cultural de Santeaguenses in 1986 to help their hometown. They hold cultural, recreational, and social events to bring together people from Santiago and to provide humanitarian assistance to their hometown. They raise money through fundraising activities and member contributions.

Pro-Dominican-identity cultural organizations

These organizations also address the need for cultural integration, serving a function almost identical to the hometown associations, but focusing exclusively on the New York community. Like hometown associations, they concentrate exclusively on cultural, recreational, and sports activities, but are not linked to particular regions in Dominican Republic.

Examples include the Desfile Dominicano del Bronx Inc. and the newspaper *The Dominican Times*, both of which target the entire Dominican community. The objectives of the former, created in 1990, are to have an annual Dominican parade in the Bronx and to provide services such as orientation on immigration matters and housing to the Bronx Dominican community.

Other organizations with more modest but similar ambitions include Hermandad Dominicana, Asociación Cultural y Deportiva Pioneros and Club Chepe Ramírez, all in Queens. They organize sports, recreational, and cultural events for the community at large. Their funding comes from donations and member contributions. They often struggle to survive because of their unstable financial situation.

Indigenous Civic Organizations

Like cultural organizations, civic organizations can also be considered mutualist in nature. Like the former, they are often born from grass-roots efforts to provide mutual support and to enhance the quality of life in the community. Some offer services such as naturalization campaigns and hope to ultimately promote political participation. We have divided these organizations in two sub-categories: specialized and multiservice organizations.

Specialized civic organizations

Among the 14 identified Dominican civic organizations, half address specific service areas or serve targeted groups such as children, youth, tenants, or single parents. For example, in Queens, Hermanos Unidos specializes in sports and recreation activities for children. Unión Comunal organizes recreational activities for youth and rallies to support neighborhood-wide issues related to land use and housing.

Multiservice civic organizations

These organizations typically serve a wider clientele, offering a broader set of services, or in some cases, a combination of breadth in clients and services offered. These types of organizations vary in their size, degree of formality, and age, but in general they tend to be well established—often formally incorporated as non-profits—and their success in fundraising allows them to hire personnel or rent or buy their own space. In fact, many of these organizations are now well-established government contractors in the community. The original impetus for these organizations was a belief that government and elected officials were not doing their jobs and so Dominicans themselves had to intervene. Two contrasting examples of this type are Alianza Dominicana, in Washington Heights and Centro Cívico Quisqueya, in Queens

It is important to note that leaders of both specialized and multiservice organizations are often involved in local politics. They are very vocal in public debates about what is or is not good for the community. In fact, "politics"—both about the United States and the Dominican Republic—permeates most Dominican-organized efforts, with various degrees of emphasis. Spencer (1994), a Dominican activist and social scientist, argues that the political nature of Dominican organizations in New York City stems from historical developments linked to the political forces that caused many Dominicans to leave their mother country:

> . . . ethnic associations in the Dominican community are an expression of a form of political organization that proliferated in the country after the defeat of the 1965 revolution. In the midst of the repression that followed, political parties, especially those of the left, promoted the so-called *clubes culturales* to avoid persecution. Once in New York, they started to replicate these organizations focusing on supporting the political opposition in the Dominican Republic. When the mentality of a sojourner started to fade from the minds of many Dominicans, these groups started to play a role in promoting their political participation in the United States (Spencer 1994, p. 17).

Trade Associations

These organizations differ from sociocultural and civic organizations in two important ways. First, they are not located in one particular geographic area, but instead attract individuals from all city boroughs, based on a common, often work-related, interest. Second, their primary purpose is promotion of member interests. We have distinguished two sub-categories in this group: professional and entrepreneurial associations.

Professional associations

Often middle class in origin, these associations define themselves in two ways: as Dominicans and as professionals. For example, the Asociación Dominicana de Abogados, created in 1990, serves as a network for about 150 lawyers, while supporting lawyers who migrate from the Dominican Republic and providing free legal advice to the Dominican community. Another example is the Asociación de Policias Dominicanos, created in 1993 by Dominican police officers with the explicit goals of improving the image of Dominicans in New York and of making the justice system more accessible to the Hispanic communities. This emergent association has programs for the elderly and for school children. It also tries to recruit Dominicans and Hispanics in general to the New York City Police Department.

Entrepreneurial associations

These are non-profit organizations that bring together owners of for-profit Dominican organizations. While they are not typically grassroots associations, they play an important role in the community because they help promote economic development. They often fund com-

munity activities and provide scholarships and other support to Dominican youth. An example of this type of organization is the Dominican Grocers Association.

Entrepreneurial organizations tend to reflect the socioeconomic heterogeneity of the Dominican community. Members of this community belong to different social worlds, depending on their status as rich or poor; workers or managers; professionals or unskilled laborers; or workers, small business owners, or entrepreneurs. This class heterogeneity may help explain the political and ideological diversity of the community.

Indigenous Umbrella Organizations

This category includes organizations that coordinate the work of smaller organizations. We found four that serve as important resources for parts of the Dominican community. One example is Expresión Dominicana, created in 1992 from thirty Dominican organizations that represent all boroughs. Its goal is to promote the political development of Dominican youth. Reflecting a unique set of binational concerns, this organization has established and maintained a link with the legislative bodies of Dominican Republic, even though its members are mostly interested in promoting political participation in the United States.

Non-Indigenous Relevant Organizations

Many non-profit and governmental organizations in northern Manhattan assist the highly concentrated Dominican population. Two examples in this category are the city- and state-funded Institute of Dominican Studies at the City University of New York (CUNY), and the non-profit Coalition for Immigrant Rights, both of which are directed by Dominicans.

Conclusions: Dominican Strategies of Community Organization

Our sample of 51 Dominican organizations provides a portrait of a vibrant community, one full of organizing efforts and internal contradictions. Most Dominicans agree on the need to develop and support community-based organizations to provide services at the neighborhood level. But there are diverse opinions about the benefits and drawbacks of the present strategies of collective organization. Some argue that as more Dominicans assume leadership positions in organizations that represent the status quo and the existing power structure, the more responsive the government will be to community problems. Others believe that there is a danger that leaders and entire organizations will be co-opted. This view holds that these leaders may lose sight of the real issues and devote themselves to ensuring the survival and growth of their organizations. What is interesting is that all leaders emphasize the grass-roots origin of their organizations, and they are critical of the status quo. A participant explained this by saying: "the more they have links with the status quo, the more radical their discourse must be to maintain some credibility in the community."

This debate also reveals a diversity of beliefs about how Dominicans *should* organize politically. Some believe that the best strategy is to bring more Dominicans into the political structures at all levels of decision-making, from school boards to the city council to the state legislature. On the other hand, others believe in the need to create coalitions with non-Dominican marginalized groups to promote other forms of popular participation that will pressure the status quo. While these two philosophies are not mutually exclusive, they tend to inspire different styles of community work and they produce different types of community organizations. These contradictions are an important feature of the Dominican community, of its intellectual dynamism, and its ideological and political diversity.

Leaders' Perceptions of the Dominican Community's Needs and Problems

The group discussions we held with community leaders helped identify important needs and problems of the community. Leaders discussed in detail the obstacles to successful integration and the obstacles to the active participation in American society faced by community members. They identified both external and internal barriers. The problems most often cited were housing, education, public safety, and the lack of economic opportunities. The main obstacles discussed were language barriers and

other factors of the immigrant experience; generalized discrimination; negative experiences with state officials; and the lack of political power.

Housing

Leaders in the focus groups identified a serious housing problem in Washington Heights, where the largest Dominican population is concentrated. Most Dominicans are not homeowners, so their housing problems are availability and affordability. Leaders claimed that in the past several years rents have skyrocketed. They assert that one of the reasons rents are disproportionately high is the inflationary effect of crime. Drug traffickers, for example, pay extraordinary sums of money to rent apartments out of which they run their businesses. The average renter cannot compete with such offers.

The high rents have generated two types of responses. One is a trend to move out of the area, often to the South Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. Not only are families moving out but many informal organizations such as township groups have also moved to the Bronx, creating new practices and transforming neighborhood life, as people must travel to meet with one another. The second response to high rents is double occupancies, or the practice by which several families live in the same apartment. Housing problems also affect the traditional family structure as family members leave home to look for housing elsewhere in the city.

Public Safety

Leaders claimed that another reason for the exodus of working class families from Washington Heights is neighborhood violence caused by the drug economy. What is ironic, they say, is that police efforts to combat this illegal activity often target those who are innocent. Leaders stated that Dominicans are particularly targeted by law enforcement agencies as if there were a direct correlation between being a criminal and being Dominican:

> They see a group of teenagers in the street playing ball, and throwing the basketball, and they immediately believe that they are gang members. They think they are youngsters selling drugs, or on drugs. If something happens in this neighborhood they immediately run to look for that group, just because they are Latinos, they are Dominicans. And unfortunately, they judge us by what they hear, and they don't examine the situation to understand what is going on (Group #4, p. 26).[5]

As a result of this heightened focus, there are large numbers of Dominican youth in prison who have been arrested on drug-related charges. Leaders lament that in the meantime, the "big fish" are still free and operating their businesses. This is one of the reasons why the relationship with the police is fraught with friction in the Dominican community.

Education

The low quality of education, the lack of resources, and overcrowded schools are the most urgent educational concerns cited by the Dominican leaders in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. They also mentioned a pressing need for more day care centers so that parents of young children can work.

Overcrowding merged in many leaders' minds with the question of quality. Many parents can not send their children to the district's schools because there is not enough room for them. Further they argued that the schools where Dominicans make up a large share of the students often have fewer resources compared to other schools:

> By looking at District 24, which governs some specific areas of Queens, one can see that those schools where the majority of students are Anglos or foreigners of an orientation other than Latino/a, the schools look like private schools. All of the resources stay in the area; new developments stay in that area. If we look at P.S. 19 and some others, where the majority of the students are Dominican, they look like schools from third world countries (Group #3, p. 4).

Leaders commented that while Hispanics are represented in the decision-making levels of some schools, few are Dominican. They

would like to see more Dominican teachers and administrators in the schools and on school boards in areas with large Dominican populations.

Another problem mentioned was that many children, whose first language is Spanish, are placed in special education programs that tend to isolate and stigmatize them. Many participants considered this practice a clear example of discrimination.

Job Opportunities and Economic Development

Dominican leaders are well aware that their community is not homogenous. They identified two distinct problems experienced by its members with respect to job opportunities. The first are problems faced by individuals with few job skills. They claim that these individuals must work at two or more jobs and are subject to poor working conditions. In addition, leaders mentioned that most of the Dominican immigration has occurred at a time when the American economy has shifted from a manufacturing to a service economy. It is hard, they argue, for low-skilled Dominicans to compete in this context. Many Dominicans resort to jobs in the informal economy (i.e., selling empanadas on a street corner, doing "off the books" cleaning or building repairs), but this type of work does not provide a sufficient income. Professionals also face discrimination:

> At the work place there are also obstacles. Barriers here are called glass ceilings, when a woman gets to the executive level and she can suddenly not move past that level. We Hispanics, and we Dominicans in particular—because I have lived it and there are a lot of others who have lived it too—crash into the ceiling above (Group #4, p. 21).

Leaders also mentioned the need for more Dominicans to be employed in government and non-profit organizations in Dominican neighborhoods.

Obstacles to Integration

Participants characterized the Dominican experience of integration into American society as traumatic. Leaders argued that the Dominican immigrant has encountered a hostile economic and social environment. Despite this, they believed that members of the community have begun to acculturate and join the American mainstream. Participants offered as evidence of this the existence of a second generation of Dominicans who are enrolled in college and who will become a new source of labor and human capital.

Leaders stressed that the community is composed of many "types" of Dominicans, who cannot be treated or analyzed in a homogenous manner. An important distinction mentioned was that between legal and illegal immigrants:

> The problem is that the needs of the Dominican are divided into two classes. The Dominican who is here legally and for whom it can be easier to obtain some services quickly . . . and those who are here illegally, which is a great number, to whom services are not available because of the problem of having to denounce those persons whose papers are not in order. Thus, those people who need the services the most are limited to the low number [of] services they can receive (Group #4, p. 8).

The Immigrant Adaptation Experience

In the leaders' opinions, immigrants' arrival directly to Washington Heights reduces the immediacy of the need to learn English. While this situation is not unique to the Dominican community, it can make immigrants feel culturally isolated, which in turn makes the process of integration longer and harder. Indeed, leaders stressed that Dominican immigrants maintain direct and strong ties to their country. Geographic proximity allows them to travel there often. In their minds, they will some day return to their country. As one participant expressed: "Dominicans are divided between their country and the United States." Yet, nearly half of all Dominicans in New York City are U.S. citizens.

Leaders argued that the sojourner attitudes, however, which are typical of all immigrant groups, are reinforced in the case of the Dominicans by negative experiences upon arrival to New York. They have few economic

opportunities and they develop a sense that there is no real interest on the part of the dominant society to help them:

> The traditional system that has been established is not interested . . . For them to maintain power and control over the services and the resources that are available, isolation works better (Group #3, p. 20).

This perception may help explain the Dominican's ambivalence toward the receiving society. In addition, they experience a discriminatory society, one which classifies them with several socially charged labels; as Dominicans they are Hispanics, immigrants, and people of color:

> Because it is a racist city, we have to eventually, in one way or another, identify ourselves as a group and it forces us to some extent to an identity that I would almost dare say is superficial. On the one hand, at a cultural level, we are Dominicans; and on the other hand, at the ethnic level, we can be black, that is mulattos (Group #3, p. 12).

Participants argued that many immigrants dislike the negative image of Dominicans in the mass media and prefer to avoid being identified as such. Hence the second generation may experience a lack of identity as Dominican, while not being accepted as "Americans" either.

Discrimination

Negative stereotypes about Dominicans represent, in the participants' view, a major barrier of integration. In many cases, leaders argued, it is not just the Anglo community that discriminates, but also other Hispanic communities. Further, racist stereotypes have been reinforced by images in the media about violence and drugs in the community. Leaders believe such stereotypes translate into prejudice and discrimination on the part of government agency employees.

Negative Relationship with the Police

Leaders indicated that the community's relationship with the police is a significant obstacle to integration. Many leaders acknowledged that the city has made an effort to recruit police officers from the Dominican community, especially after the disturbances in Washington Heights during 1992 when a young Dominican was killed by the police. However, while participants expressed conflicting views about whether the relationship between the police and the community has improved since that time, there is a consensus that the relationship is still problematic, if not antagonistic:

> Dominicans in Washington Heights and the police are enemies. The police play the role of an invading troop that comes from the suburbs to Washington Heights. They don't know the Dominican culture. They see a Dominican somewhere and think that just because he's standing at a corner it means that he is selling drugs. They don't know that over there [in the island] this is a very common practice [standing at a corner]. Is this lack of comprehension or ignorance? (Group #4, p. 28).

There appears, indeed, to be no trust upon which to build a good relationship. Participants in the focus groups provided several reasons for this lack of trust. Some argued that Dominicans in general are "anti-police" in their country and that this attitude accompanies them when they arrive to the United States. Others agreed with this, but argued that this attitude is triggered and reinforced by actual police behavior and attitudes toward Dominicans in New York. An example of this, according to participants, is the way the police treat Dominican taxi drivers, which some characterized as abusive.

Participants asserted that what they characterized as racist and discriminatory behavior on the part of the Anglo police has been confirmed by Dominican police officers, who must cope with derogatory comments about their community from their colleagues. One participant said:

> I know this because I have a police officer at home . . . he has been transferred to 34th [precinct] and he says he can't wait to be taken out of there, because he

says the lack of respect for the community makes him want to vomit (Group #1, p. 29).

Another participant who is a member of the police force said:

> Does racism exist [in the police]? It exists. In the past, they have treated us with some resentment. They don't trust us, because many of them think that before being police officers, we might have been drug dealers. They don't trust us much (Group #3, p. 18).

Attitudes Toward Public Services

Some participants argued that the image Dominicans have of government services is largely based on their knowledge or experience with the government in the Dominican Republic. Dominicans have not been socialized to believe that they have a right to government services nor to expect efficient service delivery. The tendency is to distrust government and its representatives.

Using social services is in some way counterintuitive and often a source of shame, participants added. The Dominican culture rewards self-reliance and the ability to survive without having to depend on anyone. While this attitude may explain why many Dominicans do not consider accessing government programs, it also prevents them from taking advantage of resources and programs that could improve the quality of their lives.

This situation is intensified by a strong sense that staff people in government agencies are racist:

> The general relationship between Dominicans and the state agencies . . . is . . . hostile (Group #4, p. 28).

There is also the problem of how Dominicans are treated in centers for public assistance:

> This is a constant complaint that women voice; people complain that they are treated like dogs . . . we have problems with almost all government agencies (Group #1, p. 26).

A recurrent theme in the focus groups was the need to create mechanisms by which Dominicans could learn how to access government services. Dominicans need to learn to become educated consumers of public services and social services so they can not only use them, but demand quality and good treatment when they become users. At the same time, this informational campaign needs to be coupled with training government staff on better customer relations. While this problem is not exclusive to the Dominican community, it affects them deeply, given their triple attributes as Hispanics, immigrants, and people of color.

Barriers to Political Participation

Leaders acknowledged that Dominicans' ignorance of the U.S. political system and the low numbers of adult Dominicans who are U.S. citizens are concrete obstacles to political participation. Another factor that contributes to diluted political participation in this country is the energy that Dominican Republic politics takes away from interest in U.S. politics. One focus group participant expressed this in writing as follows: "The Dominican political parties with branches in New York City have monopolized the activism of the more politically conscious immigrants and this has halted the development of the Dominican immigrant community."

Others argued during the focus group discussions that Dominican politicians and candidates in the United States depend on organizations or politicians from the Dominican Republic in order to succeed in New York. Similarly, politicians from the island travel to New York to campaign. The strong ties between Dominicans in New York and those on the island are manifested in this symbiotic political relationship.

Yet there is controversy within the community about whether Dominicans in New York should participate actively in Dominican Republic politics, or whether they should develop an independent political agenda in the United States. One side argues that Dominicans must keep in touch with and participate in the political life of the island. This reinforces the community's cultural identity and creates a solid base to mobilize people across the board. In contrast, others claim that it is not possible to build

trust if candidates and elected officials in New York have direct connections with political parties on the island. The only way to build a broad and unified political base, they argue, is by developing an independent political agenda that focuses on Dominican needs in the United States.

These conflicting elite views are reflected in individuals' participatory behaviors. In the mid-1980s, Dominicans were elected to community offices, such as community development agencies and planning boards. In the early 1990's, the Dominican community elected a Dominican to the New York City Council. Yet, many leaders expressed concern that the community was not achieving its potential in terms of achieving political power:

> In the past three or four years, there has been an increase in the number of Dominicans that register to vote, that become citizens, and that are interested in participating in the political process. I think that it is obviously going to be a snowball effect. In the next ten years, this is going to grow even more and as [name] said before, it may be that we send a Juan, Juana, or Maria to the United States Congress to represent the Dominican community. More than that, I think that our number will come close to those of surrounding electoral groups in the city and the state (Group #1, p. 43).

They also agree, however, on the need to increase the community's awareness of the importance of direct participation and active involvement:

> . . . as our political power grows, the discrimination starts to disappear. As long as we don't gather political power, we will continue to be discriminated against (Group #4, p. 19).

But the discussions on political participation and community empowerment also uncovered two contrasting views about what this participation means. Some would like to see more grass-roots organizations formed by community groups and block associations. This group represents a new breed of community leaders who are critical of traditional Dominican leadership and want to maintain their independence from them. The other group represents a more traditional leadership that believes the community's power lies in full political participation at state and local levels. They would like to see more Dominican involvement in electoral politics. They argue that Dominicans will not have power as a community until they become an important voting block. Only then will elected officials listen to their demands and provide them with needed services:

> We are living in a city where the vote signifies power and it is not used . . . We can [tell the Mayor] this or that, but if he knows that in the group no one is going to vote for him or that they have not elected him to that position, the services in that area will be very limited (Group #4, p. 29).

Participants also claimed that one important problem for the community is the absence of employees and decision makers of public service organizations who live in the community. Yet, the leaders insisted that the community needed more Dominicans in positions of power within organizations that help the community, as well as a need for more Dominicans delivering the services.

> There are not enough of us in key positions . . . enough of us who are directors of organizations, big bosses, the ones who control the money, make the decisions. For example, in Washington Heights almost all the organizations that receive half a million dollars and more are white and they have been for a long time and they decide what programs, how they will educate the community (Group #1, p. 37).

Dominican Leaders' Assessment of their Community and its Organizations

In the participants' views, true leadership requires a personal commitment to serve the community and a sense of integrity, which not all of those who label themselves leaders have:

We have a credibility problem in the community. Many of the people that have been in the midst of the community leadership are a little wasted; then, they don't have the capacity to enthuse other people because their credibility has been lost. That requires, then, a new leadership that will have to carry the title of leaders . . . A community like ours can not come out of the situation it is in if it does not generate greater participation. [We need] an activism is which each individual makes a contribution without expecting a salary or a political favor (Group #2, p. 63).

A group of Dominican leaders was very critical of some of the established organizations that had received external funding as well as their leadership. Some leaders complained that much of the funding that poured into the community after the disturbances of 1992 was monopolized by a few large organizations. Yet, according to these critics, the pouring of resources into the community was an outcome of the fear created by popular mobilization, which many of the formal leaders tried to stop as the disturbances began.

Leaders identified the following contributions of the Dominican community to New York City:

- Dominicans have transformed Washington Heights from a deprived area into a residential and business area;

- Dominicans have expanded the *bodegas* (community markets) and the supermarkets, thus strengthening the economic base of the community;

- Dominicans are creating an alternative transportation industry—the non-medallion taxis. They serve a need in the community because Yellow Cabs often deny trips to individuals and often overcharge. Other businesses are growing around this activity, such as auto parts stores and auto repair garages;

- Dominicans are enthusiastic and creative; they are fighters, they have an entrepreneurial spirit and a sense of independence. Evidence of this is the healthy informal economy that provides jobs to individuals in a range of roles, from street vendors to real estate agents; and

- There are many professionals as well as college students who represent the hope of the Dominican community. There is a need to make them more aware of their responsibilities and motivate them to stay in the community when they graduate. This may be one of the most important challenges for the Dominican community in the coming years.

In sum, Dominican leaders presented a candid portrait of their community that reflects their own frustrations as organizers and their high expectations for the community. At the same time this portrait reveals deep-seated criticisms of the way in which the system has failed to support this community in its process of assimilation and integration.

Colombian Organizations in the New York City Metropolitan Area

As in the Dominican community, Colombian organizations range from informal sports and social groups to formal non-profit organizations that receive external funding, have permanent paid staff, and provide services in a systematic way. Yet the number and the range of such organizations in the Colombian community is smaller, with most organizations tending toward the informal side of the spectrum. Table Five provides an overview.

In our sample, most of the New Jersey organizations are sociocultural, while in Queens, sociocultural and civic organizations predominate. Unlike the Dominican case, we did not find many non-profit or governmental agencies whose executive directors and upper-tier leaders are Colombian. In addition, there is only one confederation in the process of forming in New Jersey. A description of each type of organization follows.

Table Five. Overview of Colombian Organizations

Type of Organization	*Number Identified*
Socio-cultural	
Hometown based	6
Cultural	10
Subtotal	16
Socio-civic	
Specialized	11
Multiservice	5
Subtotal	16
Trade Associations	
Professional	3
Subtotal	3
Umbrella	1
Total Number of Indigenous Organizations Studied	36
Non-Indigenous Organizations Studied	0
Total Number of Organizations Studied	**36**

Indigenous Sociocultural Organizations

These organizations offer opportunities for recreation and socializing, which are highly appreciated by Colombian immigrants searching for a sense of community. The common nationality shared as Colombians, and the idea of working to preserve the Colombian identity, are reasons that drive this type of group. The level of formal organization and sophistication varies, as do the amount of resources managed and the programs and activities each offers.

With the exception of a few that receive funds from government agencies, most of these organizations obtain funds from their membership and the broader Colombian community during fundraising dinners, parties, ballroom dances, and cultural events. Groups also solicit donations from local Colombian and other Hispanic businesses. Most organizations do not have paid staff, but rely on volunteers. Few have permanent space. Meetings and other activities take place in schools, libraries, churches, and members' homes.

Pro-Colombian-identity organizations

The purpose of these organizations is for Colombians to keep in contact with one another and to maintain ties to the larger Colombian community. These organizations provide occasions where members can re-create patterns, values, and beliefs from their common culture.

One example is Club Colombia, created by Colombian residents in Union City, New Jersey. Now in its third year, this organization has a board of directors and twenty active members. They hold monthly meetings and one of their most important activities is discussing the political and social life of Colombia.

Sports organizations

There are two organizations in our sample that bring Colombians together and promote a sense of identity through sports. These organizations are Liga Colombiana de Bolos (LICOBOL) and Football Women's Soccer League (FWSL). They serve as leagues for the respective sports and they promote and coordinate the participation of their teams in local, national, and international championships. LICOBOL coordinates activities for thirty-four bowling teams, while the FWSL serves eight women's soccer teams. More than three-quarters of the members of both organizations are Colombians with the rest being Latin Americans. They obtain funds from businesses, banks, and private donations.

Cultural and artistic organizations

These organizations hold events that promote the arts, culture, and folk expressions from Colombia and from Colombian artists living in New York. They act as brokers between Colombian artists and the community, arranging painting exhibitions, concerts, theater presentations, dance presentations, film and video festivals, and arts-and-crafts shows.

Three organizations in our sample extend their focus to Latin American culture and

arts. Two examples are the Latin American Cultural Center of Queens and the Festival Latinoamericano de Queens. The former was created in 1992 to promote Latin American folklore and artistic expressions such as theater, literature, plastic arts, and music. The latter organizes events that feature artistic and folk expressions from Latin America. Both have been encouraged and supported by the Office of Cultural Affairs in the Queens Borough President's Office. Such support comes in the form of funds and office space. The Latin American Cultural Center of Queens also receives funding from several government agencies.

Indigenous Civic Organizations

These grass-roots organizations work to enhance the quality of life in the community. However, mutual support and opportunities for socializing are reasons that also explain their popularity. There are two categories: those that address the needs of a specific segment of the population and those that offer multiple services to a diverse population.

Specialized civic organizations

Target populations served by this type of organization in our sample include Colombian youth, Colombian children with health problems, Colombian legal immigrants, and Colombian prisoners in New York jails. In addition, there are five organizations that carry out political activities. With the exception of one political organization, all are located in New York. The Centro Juvenil Colombiano (CEJUCOL) is a good example of an organization with well-defined goals. CEJUCOL's main objective is to counter the negative stereotypes of Colombians by offering educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities for youth. CEJUCOL organizes soccer, painting, and theater programs for Colombian youth in Queens.

Another highly formalized organization in our sample is Colombian Charities of America, which was created to help the victims of a natural disaster in Armero, a small Colombian town. Having collected a significant amount of money for Armeros' victims, the organization then began to focus on the needs of Colombian residents in New York. Currently, Colombian Charities offers orientation and assistance for immigrants and also organizes citizenship campaigns.

Several specialized Colombian organizations work in the political arena. They promote community mobilization to influence the policy-making process at local, state, and federal levels. Among them, some focus exclusively on the participation of Colombians in U.S. political, economic, and social affairs. They encourage and support Hispanic, and particularly Colombian, candidates to office. They also organize voter registration campaigns as well as talks to inform the Colombian and larger Hispanic community about U.S. political life.

Other political organizations in the specialized category represent the programs and interests of Colombian political parties. During election periods, these groups become very active, organizing political campaigns to obtain votes for their candidates in Colombia. Organizations representing leftist groups in Colombia also publicize human right abuses there. For example, these groups publicized what they considered were military and paramilitary campaigns of extermination of their groups' leaders and activists.

Multiservice organizations

Most of the Colombian multiservice organizations have developed from sociocultural to civic organizations, as they have redefined their goals over time. For instance, El Centro Cívico Colombiano, in existence for 18 years, was first created as a way to bring Colombians together to maintain Colombian values and traditions. Over the years, it organized programs to help Colombian immigrants. Today, it defines itself as a non-profit organization with the twin goals of improving the image of Colombians in this country and offering services to the Hispanic population in general. In addition to recreational activities, this organization offers free programs to the community, such as how to apply for American citizenship, information about immigration policies, activities for senior citizens, English classes, and history and geography classes for Colombian children. The most important activity and source of revenue is organizing the July 20th festivities in Queens' largest park.

Other multiservice organizations we identified are Reaching the Community and Panorama Colombiano, both started in 1992. The

former offers drug and alcohol prevention programs and immigration services. Panorama Colombiano carries out two activities: publishing a newspaper about Colombia and the Colombian community in New York and organizing activities for Colombian youth.

As a general feature, many of the multiservice organizations offer English classes and assistance for those who want to become citizens. The right to dual citizenship established by the Colombian Constitution in the early 1990s has motivated these organizations to inform Colombians of this advantage. Most of these organizations also mobilize to fundraise when natural disasters strike in Colombia.

Professional Associations

There are two associations in our sample that serve the interests of Colombian professionals in New York. Asociación de Profesionales Colombianos en Nueva York was created in the mid-1970s by a group of Colombian professionals. Today the organization's objective is to develop and foster a spirit of togetherness among all professionals and to target their activities toward the most important needs of the Colombian community in New York. Every year, the association organizes a Feria de la Salud (health fair). During this event, medical professionals offer free medical and dental check-ups. Also offered are workshops on drug prevention and other health care themes.

The second professional association is the Asociación de Profesionales y Estudiantes Colombianos en el Exterior (PECX), founded in 1991 to establish links among U.S.-based Colombian professionals, graduate students, and professional institutions in Colombia. All members of the association are college graduates and many have masters' and doctoral degrees. Working committees focus on research topics of interest to Colombians in New York or on the development of science and research in Colombia. For instance, a health committee is studying the impact of AIDS on Colombians in New York.

Indigenous Umbrella Organizations

The Federación de Organizaciones de New Jersey represents a new effort among leaders of Colombian organizations to coordinate their work. Members have agreed to develop a strategy to promote Hispanic political candidates who acknowledge the needs of the Colombian community.

Overview of Colombian Community Organizations

Like the Dominican case, our inventory of Colombian organizations yields a distinct picture of a dynamic community where successful organizing efforts coexist with internal contradictions. There is a rich variety in the degrees of formalization, in the goals, and even in the ages of these organizations. Yet most are similar in that they do not receive external funding, do not have a paid staff, and do not have their own space. Most sustain themselves from member contributions, fundraising events in the community, and solicitations to Colombian businesses. Most of these organizations mobilize their members when tragedy strikes Colombia and are able to collect enormous sums of money in a very short time.

The inventory suggests that there is great human potential and civic spirit within these organized efforts. Yet, these organizations depend on the time availability of individuals who must also earn a living. Their success, even under these conditions, suggests that they are ready to attract more stable funding, abandon some of their localism, and create channels of communication with government agencies as well as with private sources of support. They would also benefit from technical information about how to work more efficiently and effectively in the context of U.S. institutions.

Leaders' Perceptions of the Colombian Community's Needs and Problems

Needs and Problems

The most important problems in the Colombian community identified by Colombian leaders were education, job opportunities, and the need to improve the negative image of Colombians in the United States. Colombian

leaders also identified specific obstacles to integration and participation, including discrimination, lack of information and orientation for new immigrants, poor relationships with the police, unfamiliarity with language and culture, an absence of unity in the Hispanic community, and underutilization of government services.

Education

Colombian leaders expressed their concern about the quality of education that Colombian children receive in New York. They mentioned overcrowded conditions, the paucity of Spanish-speaking staff and teachers, and the common practice of placing immigrant children in special education programs.

Another area of concern was the low level of participation of Colombian parents in school matters. Many who cannot speak English are unable to follow their children's performance in school or participate in parents' associations and other school activities. The schools' lack of interest and failure to provide information to parents was blamed.

Colombian leaders also commented on the lack of opportunities in higher education. They claimed that there are not enough grants and that young people who want a college education have little information. Many students do not know how to fill out forms and school staff and/or parents are unable to guide them in these procedures.

Job Opportunities

Colombian leaders agree that migration to the United States is largely due to the desire for better job opportunities. However, when Colombian immigrants look for jobs upon arrival, they face a reality far different from the one they imagined when they left home. Those who earned professional degrees in Colombia, such as economists, lawyers, and engineers, must frequently work in the service economy. Their qualifications do not fare well in a highly competitive job market, where connections, language ability, and U.S. credentials are more highly valued. Those who have manual, mechanical, and technical skills also face problems. They lack the necessary training to adapt to the American workplace and to the use of modern machines and tools:

> We all come here to work. The problem is that as workers, often when we change countries, we have to change professions. Those who want to keep their profession face trouble . . . These workers have to adapt themselves to the job system here. Not only in relation to the language, but in relationship to the job procedures and other number of things. They start to lose their self-esteem. For instance, a mechanic that in Colombia was very brilliant finds he is relegated to be an assistant of another mechanic, who many times knows less than he does (Group #2, p. 19).

Leaders also reported on the troubles that workers with specialized skills (such as construction workers, electricians, and plumbers) have with unions that protect these occupations. They believe that existing unions are dominated by specific ethnic groups that monopolize the business and impede access to workers of different ethnicities. Some leaders argued that the unions are particularly discriminatory to Hispanics:

> . . . it is particularly difficult for Latinos, specially for Colombians or other Latinos who are not Puerto Ricans, to be integrated into the unions. The construction and transportation unions are the domain of whites (especially Irish and Italians). Then if we try to compete with them they say: "stop! you can't enter here, you are going to steal a job where we make $20.00 per hour." I and other people in the Colombian community who own small businesses related to the construction industry have tried to work in places that are dominated by unions. Then, they put us out. They chase us out, violently, they even have come to destroy our tools with the police's approval (Group #3, p. 33).

Public Image of Colombians

According to the leaders, Colombians believe that the public associates them with drug dealers. They blamed the mass media for contributing to this image by focusing on stories

about the drug cartels and on their related acts of violence and extortion. In addition, the government and the media often portray Colombia as a country dominated by violence and corruption. Leaders thought that this image was not only distorted but represented a small part of Colombian reality. Leaders believe that many Americans do not trust Colombians. Moreover, this negative image has affected Colombians' own perceptions of themselves. Many Colombians are afraid or ashamed to reveal their nationality; others say they are from another Latin American country. Often, those who disclose their Colombian nationality do so while assuring people they are not "bad" Colombians.

The leaders believe that the Colombian community in New York must influence American mass media and the government to create a more accurate and thus positive image of the country and the Colombians:

> U.S. mass media must promote the positive aspects of Colombia and the contributions that Colombians have offered in many areas. These things are not publicized here. Two small local newspapers might make a reference to these events, but this type of news never are widespread at the national level (Group #4, p. 58).

Leaders also stated that changing the negative image of Colombians would require that the U.S. government take responsibility for this perception by acknowledging that drug consumption in the United States feeds the drug business and the drug-related mafia.

Obstacles to Integration

Colombian leaders agree that their community in New York in many ways remains removed from the rest of the city's affairs. Many newcomers find a familiar environment in Colombian neighborhoods where they can satisfy most of their needs. The lack of English causes new immigrants to remain isolated. Although leaders recognize this isolation, they acknowledge that the community itself could help immigrants become more integrated. They also believe that Colombian organizations could offer more English classes and help newcomers find classes offered by other institutions outside their neighborhoods. Some leaders felt that community organizations could serve as a bridge between the community and the rest of American society. They thought that this would be best accomplished by offering workshops to supply information about American culture, the political system, and job opportunities.

The Immigrant Adaptation Experience

A typical characteristic of the immigrant experience is the lack of information and orientation new immigrants encounter. Many leaders believe that the most basic hurdles faced by new immigrants result from the lack of English, a lack of understanding about how the American system works, and more specifically about what kind of services, opportunities, rights, and obligations immigrants have in this country. Some leaders believe that the U.S. government bears the primary responsibility for publicizing this information. However, others believe that Colombian organizations in New York could also contribute. Leaders suggested that the U.S. government could fund some of the Colombian organizations' programs such as English classes, and an orientation on the U.S. political system and political parties. They also believe that government and community organizations must hire specialized staff sociologists to assist new immigrants, such as social workers, psychologists, and sociologists.

Discrimination

A recurrent theme mentioned by leaders was that many Colombians feel they are being excluded and singled out because of their nationality and the prejudices associated with being Colombian. They believe that the Anglo community in Jackson Heights has not welcomed Colombian residents. They believe that the large police presence at events organized by Colombians is requested by Anglos and supported by officials on the community board. On this point, a leader stated the following:

> As Latinos we are very cheerful. When we want to show our euphoria we make noise, and we celebrate by dancing. When Colombia won some of the soccer games, many people went out to the

streets to celebrate. Then, the Anglo community, who is a minority and doesn't reflect the interests of the Jackson Heights population, called the police and tried to manipulate it in order to "step on our people." Later many of our organizations complained about these events. And the facts demonstrated that they [Anglos] were wrong. It was a typical racist reaction. Because the Colombians can be as happy as the Italians, Irish, or German people when their team wins (Group #3, p. 50).

Leaders also believe that officials on the community board with jurisdiction over Jackson Heights have supported this prejudice against Colombians. Evidence of the board's attitude is its failure to recruit Colombian members, as well as the difficulties experienced by Colombian businessmen who encounter hostility when requesting licenses or pursuing other matters at the board.

Leaders from New Jersey also gave examples of other types of discrimination by state officials. For instance they perceived discrimination in the Elizabeth (New Jersey) mayor's threats to demolish Morris Avenue, where a large number of Colombian business have flourished over the last several years. Similarly, leaders from Dover, New Jersey reported that local authorities have created many obstacles to prevent the celebration of Colombian national holidays. One leader stated:

> . . . [in Dover] We used to always celebrate July 20th and we used to request permission to do so in the park; first the park was free and no insurance was required. But over the years, they began to create obstacles to organize our holidays. They began to request $500,000 [of liability] insurance; now the insurance [premium] costs $7,000. They demanded the same amount to other groups. But the truth is that Latino people use the park more than North Americans do. The local government is doing this to stop us from organizing our festivities, that is why we feel rejected (Group #4, p. 23).

Negative Relationship with the Police

Leaders commented on the tension between the Colombian community and the police. One example cited was when Colombians pour out into the street to celebrate the Colombian soccer team's victories. During these celebrations, episodes of police brutality and other offenses have been directed toward members of the community:

> When there are any activities in the county [of Queens] that involve Colombians, the police act as though they were going to repress some sort of war, and that is offensive. It is extremely offensive since it is not the case (Group #2, p. 23).

Attitudes Toward Government Services

With respect to service utilization, leaders said that Colombian immigrants have a hard time understanding the functions and the role of the U.S. government. They do not know what services are offered nor how to use them. Further, leaders stated that an unfriendly environment in government agencies discouraged immigrants from using them. Colombians who cannot speak English cannot communicate their needs and often there are no Spanish-speaking employees. Leaders reported that Colombians feel very uncomfortable with the welfare system. They said that, culturally, Colombians have a hard time accepting money from the state.

Colombian leaders argued that government institutions would be friendlier if they hired Colombian or other Hispanic staff. In particular, leaders complained about the lack of opportunities for Colombians to work for the state or to find jobs that allow them to participate in the public policy decision-making process.

> When we decide to come to the United States, not even a minute do we think that we could come here to be waiting for welfare. We don't have this concept. We think that we are going to the United States to become better persons, to study, to work hard (Group #4, p. 21).

Barriers to Political Participation

Colombian leaders agreed that one of the main obstacles to integration is Colombians' lack of political power. The community has not been able to create an agenda to seek solutions to their needs nor has it been able to support leaders who can represent its interests before the government at local and national levels.

One of the main obstacles to political participation is that many Colombians who qualify for U.S. citizenship do not apply for it. Leaders stated that in the past, many Colombians did not become citizens because they did not want to lose their Colombian citizenship. In the early 1990s, however, the Colombian constitution legalized dual citizenship, motivating many Colombians to apply for U.S. citizenship. Moreover, many Colombians who have become citizens still do not participate in the political process. Lack of knowledge about how the U.S. government functions prevents many from voting.

Some leaders pointed out that most of the community organizations do not promote participation in American politics. Many organizations associate themselves with the political affairs of traditional Colombian parties. Nevertheless, some leaders mentioned that political organizations have recently emerged to support Hispanic leaders who will represent the interests of the Colombian community. Leaders also mentioned that some Colombian organizations have already started to organize citizenship campaigns. For the leaders interviewed, a special target population for this education campaign must be Colombian youth, as many seem indifferent towards politics.

Colombian Leaders' Assessment of Community Organizations

Some Colombian leaders think that existing organizations must transform themselves in order to tackle the problems of the Colombian community in New York. They believe that the nationalistic and patriotic values espoused by these organizations often limit their effectiveness. They also believe that Colombian organizations must empower themselves to demand solutions from the government. Leaders acknowledge that some of these organizations are already starting to help the immigrant community in New York. Leaders appreciate efforts such as offering English classes and citizenship campaigns, but they insisted that the organizations must transform themselves further, to make the well-being of the immigrant community one of their priorities.

Leaders mention the need to support political candidates who will represent the Colombian community. In this sense, they argued that there are not enough leaders who can move freely between Colombian society and Anglo society. For example, organizations could encourage Colombian candidates to run for positions on school and community boards, and ultimately for city council and other elective offices.

Leaders report that one of the main problems organizations face is the scarcity of financial resources to implement their projects. Most organizations function with money donated by their members or from fundraising events. Very few receive funding from outside sources. Either they do not know how to apply for funds or they do not meet the requirements of the grants. For example, many organizations have not taken the legal steps to become non-profit organizations, which is a serious obstacle to acquiring outside funding.

Leaders from Jackson Heights recognized the inability of Colombian organizations to work or collaborate with one other. They reported that there is a great deal of competition among organizations for attracting contacts, money, and members. They also compete with one another in the type of events they organize and in earning recognition from Colombian officials in New York and in Colombia. Not only do organizations compete with one another, but leaders within the same organization compete as well.

Leaders also mentioned that they, as well as their organizations, have not been able to create solid links with traditional Hispanic groups. Colombian leaders find it hard to admit that they can learn from others who are more organized than themselves. Nor do they see the advantages of working with other groups to find solutions to common problems. Leaders recognize that Colombians tend to hold a number of prejudices and feel superior to other Hispanics:

> I think that we have a superiority complex with other groups. This complex

does not allow us to reach out to other groups, but it divides us. We are always looking to be the best or to be the chiefs. Several times I have had the opportunity to introduce Puerto Rican leaders to Colombians and I saw how difficult this situation was for us. We feel very uncomfortable. We listen, but it is like we do not believe them. We think they are right, but in practice, we do not support them (Group #3, p. 18).

Colombian leaders stressed that their community is rich in human resources. For example, they emphasized the number of professionals who hold important positions in New York and New Jersey. Leaders also stated that many Colombians have been able to establish their own grocery shops, small stores, and restaurants. These businesses have helped revitalize areas that were in decline, thus invigorating neighborhood economies.

Finally, leaders pointed out that many professionals—some of whom were schooled in the United States—have become integrated into American society. They represent a rich pool of resources for the Colombian community itself. The risk, according to the leaders, is that many are so integrated that they may have lost their links to other Colombians in New York or New Jersey. The leaders stated that trying to motivate these professionals to help the immigrant community represents a challenge.

Conclusions:

Dominican and Colombian Community Organization and Public Policy Needs

The diverse and dynamic nature of the collective efforts in the Dominican and Colombian communities defies simple classification. Previous scholars who have studied these two communities, for example, have noted the existence of two types of organizations: expressive and instrumental (Sassen-Koob 1979; Georges 1987; Sassen-Koob 1987). The former are defined as affective in nature and serving an intermediary function for adaptation to American life; the latter are viewed as a means to reshape the exchange between the immigrant community and the host community. These studies by Sassen-Koob and Georges suggest that Dominicans have tended to develop expressive organizations, whereas Colombians have tended to develop instrumental organizations. Whether that dichotomy was in fact true when these studies were done may be debatable. This classification, however, does not seem to be the most relevant way to understand these communities today.

Two arguments form the basis for this conclusion. The first is conceptual and the second is empirical. From a conceptual point of view, in a passage described earlier in this report, Spencer (1994) challenges the relevance of the distinction between expressive and instrumental organizations to characterize Dominican community organizations. He links the development of "expressive" organizations in New York to the historical context of Dominican Republic politics and its impact on immigration dynamics. This suggests that perhaps even those Dominican organizations studied in the late 1970s and early 1980s may have had instrumental goals that were overlooked due to a classification that ignored important historical and cultural idiosyncrasies. We could argue that similar biases may have been applied to the study of Colombian immigrants.

Our inventory of Dominican and Colombian organizations suggests that organizations are best described as having a combination of expressive and instrumental goals. Moreover, in both communities, organizations that started as typically expressive have broadened their scope over time to include more instrumental goals.

There may also be geographical differences. For example, our observations suggest that Dominican organizations in Queens and the Bronx on average tend to focus more on recreational activities, while organizations in the northern Manhattan community of Washington Heights have a broader agenda of solving problems for the community or for particular groups within it, thus exhibiting more explicit instrumental goals. In the Colombian case, organizations in the core community in Queens tend to be more explicitly instrumental, while those in New Jersey tend to focus on artistic and cultural activities. None of them represents the ideal affective organization, as most are active in helping to improve the quality of life of the community.

Our study also suggests that perhaps the degree to which organizations have expressive and instrumental goals changes as organizations mature. Rather than being a reflection of the type of immigrants they represent (e.g., rural versus urban, or working class versus middle class), the organization's goals are a function of the community's ability to successfully organize, as members begin to change their sojourner mentality to one that accepts the permanence of the move to the United States. Another factor that may affect this capacity is the degree of geographical concentration or dispersion of the community.

Without denying the possible role of social class as an important factor, we believe that these two factors—length of settlement and geographical concentration—help explain interesting differences between the organizational resources of the two groups. Our observations tell us that Colombian organizations are less complex and formal than their counterparts in the Dominican community. Evidence of this is that most Colombian organizations lack non-profit status, while in the Dominican case, even small sports and cultural clubs are incorporated. This status in turn affects the ability to attract external funds, as well as the luxury to have their own space and hire staff. Few Colombian organizations receive external funding, have their own space, or have paid staff compared to the larger number of Dominican organizations that do.

Another example of this difference is that many Dominican organizations belong to larger umbrella groups that provide a meta-level of support. We did not find this pattern in the Colombian case, except for a recent effort in New Jersey. Similarly, while indigenous civic organizations in both communities are the most successful, stable, and formalized efforts to accomplish collective goals, Dominican organizations in this category are far more sophisticated in their design and goals, and they have been able to establish formal relationships with government institutions that subcontract with them for social service delivery. Ties of this type are virtually nonexistent in the Colombian community, although some leaders are becoming aware of the potential to play this role.

Other interesting differences between the two communities are clear within the sociocultural category. Both communities had similar sports-oriented clubs and groups. But the large number of hometown Dominican organizations contrasted with only one Colombian organization that can be classified as such. Colombian organizations tend to go in the other direction, as many seem to include in their membership—and many times in their leadership—individuals from other Latin American countries. In this sense, Colombians seem to relate more to their pan-American identity than do Dominicans. A final difference among the cultural organizations in the two communities is the contrast between the range of cultural activities and scope of the

Table Six. Colombian and Dominican Public Policy Needs Compared

Issues Identified as Being Important to Both Communities

- Education
- Job opportunities and economic development
- Obstacles to integration
- Immigrant adaptation experience
- Discrimination
- Police/community relations
- Public service delivery
- Barriers to political participation

Issues Identified as Being Important Only in the Colombian Community

- U.S. public image of Colombians
- Absence of unity in the Hispanic community

Issues Identified as Being Important Only in the Dominican Community

- Housing
- Public safety

Colombian and Dominican organizations involved in cultural activities. In addition to social and recreational activities, Colombian organizations have coordinated art exhibitions, concerts, and film festivals. Dominican sociocultural organizations, on the other hand, have been more narrowly focused on social and recreational activities.

A critical difference between the Colombian and the Dominican organizational base is that Dominicans have acquired more positions of leadership in governmental and non-profit organizations located directly in the community. This has not occurred at the same pace in the Colombian neighborhoods. This does not mean that Colombians do not hold leadership positions in all types of public, non-profit, and service organizations; in fact, they do, but not in positions specifically established to serve the Colombian community. Colombian professionals do not view themselves as representing their community when they apply for social service jobs as many Dominicans seem to explicitly do. This characteristic seems to follow a similar pattern in the wider geographic spread of residency of Colombian professionals throughout the metropolitan area. In contrast, many Dominicans seek employment in social service jobs within the community or in areas where they can serve the community even indirectly. For these Dominican workers, their job and community service become intertwined. Colombian activism in the community is much more an added responsibility to be borne outside of work.

There are, however, important similarities between the two communities in terms of their expressed problems and needs (see Table Six). In both cases, leaders agreed that Dominican and Colombian immigrants need to know about their legal rights and obligations, they need to learn English, and they need to better understand the U.S. political and governmental system. Leaders from both groups emphasized discrimination as a critical obstacle, pointing out that for this particular problem, it is the receiving society that needs to act to correct this. For example, leaders believed that the relationship with the police and with other staff in social service agencies will not improve only through goodwill from the community. This is a sensitive area that represents a source of conflict in both communities. In addition, leaders in both communities reported concerns with the following problems: education (crowded and impoverished schools, low quality of education, and misdiagnosis of children's problems that result in stigmas and tracking); underutilization of the professional labor force; and exploitation of unskilled laborers because of their immigrant status.

Finally, common to both communities was the perceived assets each community enjoys, particularly the human capital and entrepreneurship that each is bringing to this nation. Moreover, there is a clear interest in participating in the political life of this country. The communities are acutely aware that they need to participate more at all levels of the political system. They are equally aware that the present level of participation of most community members is low. This study suggests that the potential degree of civic involvement of Dominicans and Colombians in the New York City metropolitan area could be reinforced and channeled to produce positive results, if the indigenous organizations within these communities were more directly supported by elected officials and policy makers.

Footnotes

[1] We use the terms Latino and Hispanic interchangeably to refer to individuals in the United States who can trace their ancestry to the Spanish-speaking regions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

[2] In this report, our references to Dominicans and Colombians include individuals who can trace their ancestry to the Dominican Republic or to Colombia. These populations include immigrants as well as the U.S.-born whose ancestors migrated from these countries. We also use the term Anglo to refer to non-Hispanic whites.

[3] This is not a trivial point, because there are other Anglo and Hispanic individuals who may be very committed to supporting these communities and thus may be considered leaders, but are not part of the community.

[4] For the sake of this discussion, we will only consider organizations located in the neighborhood and are thus viewed by the community as resources to address their needs. These may include governmental and non-profit organizations within the area, as long as they are directed by a Dominican.

[5] Citations for quotations from focus group participants refer to the transcripts of those groups.

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Appendix One
Scholarly Studies of Emerging Hispanic Populations

The Migration Experience

Dominicans

González (1970); Hendricks (1974); González (1976); Belén (1977); Kayal (1978*a*); Kayal (1978*b*); Ugalde, Bean, and Cardenas (1979); Grasmuck (1984); Castro (1985); Bray (1987); Larson and Sullivan (1987); Hernández (1992); Grasmuck and Pessar (1991); Duany (1992); Ortíz and Salvo (1994)

Colombians

Chaney (1980); Chaney (1976); Cruz and Castaño (1976)

Dominicans and Colombians

Gann and Duignan (1986)

Salvadorans

Poitras (1980*a*; 1980*b*); Mozo and Vásquez (1988); Dorrington, Zambrana, and Sabagh (1989); Jones (1989)

Guatemalans

Redden (1980); Vlach (1992)

Salvadorans and Colombians

Mahler (1992)

Salvadorans and Dominicans

Sassen (1992)

Caribbean Immigrants

Bryce-Laporte (1979); Marshall (1982); Papademetriou (1985); Model (1991); New York City Department of City Planning (1992)

Central American Immigrants

Gugliotta (1982); Ferris (1987); Rodríguez (1987); Chávez and Flores (1988); Lipski (1989)

Immigrants from Various Countries and Regions

Lowenthal (1976); Gurak and Kritz (1982); Brana-Shute (1983); Youssef (1992)

Labor Force Participation and Earnings

Dominicans

Waldinger (1986); Pessar (1987*a*); Pessar (1987*b*); Portes and Guarnizo (1990); Hernández, Rivera-Batiz, and Agodini (1995)

Colombians

García Castro (1982)

Dominicans and Colombians

Gilbertson and Gurak (1993); Gilbertson (1995)

Salvadorans
Feagin (1988); Greenwell, DaVanzo, and Valdéz (1993)

Salvadorans and Guatemalans
Burns (1989)

Central American Immigrants
Wallace (1986); López-Garza (1988); Repak (1995)

Immigrants from Various Countries and Regions
Marshall (1987); Grenier and Stepik (1992); Light and Rosenstein (1995)

Community-Level Political Organization

Dominicans
Lescaille (nd); Georges (1987); Sainz (1992); Fuentes (1992); Traub (1995)

Dominicans and Colombians
Sassen-Koob (1987*a*; 1987*b*); Jenkins and Sauber (1988)

Salvadorans
Jones (1994)

Central American Immigrants
Córdova (1992); Dorrington (1992)

Reshaping Political Loyalties (Settlement)

Dominicans
Sepúlvida-Castro (1982); Duany (1994); Pessar (1995); Scholz (1995); Torres (1995)

Colombians
Powers and Macisco (1980)

Salvadorans
Córdova (1986); Leslie and Leitch (1989); Mahler (1995*b*)

Guatemalans
Dalmage (1993)

Caribbean Immigrants
Safa (1983)

Central American Immigrants
Chávez (1983); Peñalosa (1984); Cervantes et al. (1989); Wallace (1989); Chávez, Flores, and López-Garza (1990); Hagan and Rodríguez (1992)

Immigrants from Various Countries and Regions
Winnick (1990); Hoffman and Munger (1991); Horton (1992); Institute for Puerto Rican Policy (1992); Lamphere (1992); Pachon and DeSipio (1994); Mahler (1995*a*); Rodríguez et al. (1995)

Gender

Dominicans

Infante (1977); Pessar (1986); Hernández and Torres-Saillant (1996)

Colombians

García Castro (1986)

Immigrants from Various Countries and Regions

García Castro, Gearing, and Gill (1984)

Family Structure

Dominicans

Garrison and Weiss (1979)

Dominicans and Colombians

Gurak (1987); Gilbertson (1988); Gilbertson and Gurak (1992)

Other

Foster (1989); del Castillo (1987); Bonilla-Santiago (1989); Edmondson (1989); Russell and Russell (1989)

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